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"MEDDLING WOMEN"

Story Written and Directed by

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Three years before the opening of the story, Edwin Ainsworth, a young playwright of brilliant promise, and son of a wealthy and socially prominent widow, has married Grace Carter, a beautiful Southern girl whose ambitions led her to the city. Edwin was introduced to her by his old college chum, an actor and stage impresario, in whose company Grace was appearing.

Mrs. Ainsworth objected to Grace's presence, and also to Edwin's objection to Edwin writing plays on account of his mother. She brought them into contact, and who, to her surprise, she could not possibly be "nice" people.

The continued interference and meddling of Mrs. Ainsworth, who would not permit the young people an established life, as well as the meddling of Claudia Browne, a distant cousin and inmate of Mrs. Ainsworth's home; did not tend to send the young ship of the young people into peaceful waters.

Grace felt that she could endure no more of it. Her life became a round of useless inactivity. Edwin realized that his mother dominated his every action, resented it, but being a dutiful son and a gentleman, he avoided an open break in the family. He quietly watched the progress of affairs and began to seek for a way to remedy matters.

The crises seemed eminent when Grace, worn out with weariness of her existence, saw a chance of escape in the offer of Harold Chase to give her a leading role in his newest production. Edwin agreed, believing it was but fair to permit her to make use of her talents. Mrs. Ainsworth objected so strenuously that Grace to choose between her career and her husband. Edwin for the first time defied Mrs. Ainsworth and declared that he would follow his career. Mrs. Ainsworth tried to convince Edwin that he was sacrificing him and motherhood for her profession. Nothing Edwin was able to say seemed to convince her. Claudia's interference in the affair, and her part of Mrs. Ainsworth that Grace had long been in the city and had married Edwin only on account of her mother's influence, imparted this to Edwin, who ridiculed the idea of his mother's necessity for some immediate action on his part.

Harold Chase, fond of Edwin and Grace, and desiring their happiness, fears he is wrecking it altogether and suggests it may be better for Grace not to continue her career. Grace is determined to go on, because she knows that if she gives in this time, Mrs. Ainsworth will dominate her the rest of her life.

Edwin makes a last attempt to straighten things out. He calls his mother and Claudia into his study, and tells them he has at last discovered why marriages between chorus girls, actresses and singers, etc., to rich men generally prove failures. His mother listens to him scornfully, nevertheless, she listens.

Dr. Giani, who under the guise of a doctor is conducting an interesting "joint" in which the is adding up a good sized bank roll for him and place is a sort of clearing house for his associates. He keeps a carefully locked-away list of customers and other evidence that would be sensational reading if it fell into the hands of an honest prohibitionist.

Among the doctor's underlings, the most notable is a cabaret dancer, who is hired to procure for the good class to purchase liquor. Madeline offers the name worth as a likely customer.

Vincente, Madeline's dancing partner is in love with her. A certain John Wells in appearance a gentleman and looking somewhat like Edwin in height and general complexion is also a member of the gang. Wells warns Madeline that Vincente is very jealous of her and is apt to make trouble if he finds out of her connection with them. Madeline warns Wells against drinking and interfering in her love affair.

In course of time, Mrs. Ainsworth succeeds in separating Edwin and Grace. Grace now lives in her own apartment and Edwin has migrated to the Village district where he has a studio of his own and is living a life of dissipation. He has become infatuated with Madeline, who on her part has fallen honestly in love with him to Vincente's dissatisfaction. Vincente, has no influence over her up to Edwin.

Grace, whom separation from her husband has rendered less and on the verge of a mental and physical breakdown, is troubled by the interfering Claudia, that Edwin is infatuated with the cabaret dancer. Grace refuses to believe it, but Claudia suggests a divorce and that she marry Edwin. To prove to Claudia, that she is not infatuated with her, to go with her, to the cabaret where Madeline dances most of his evenings.

Meanwhile, in the cabaret, things are beginning to go wrong. Mrs. Ainsworth has requested the company of Harold to the cabaret, her intention being to buy off Madeline and reclaim her son. But Madeline has refused to be bought, contending that she loves Edwin.

At the same time, in the public foyer of the cabaret, a quarrel that comes to blows follows between Vincente and Edwin. Grace has entered with Claudia and witnessed the row. It sickens Grace, leaves her faint, dizzy, but she drops on her knees beside Edwin and begs

him to return to her - to begin life over. Edwin ashamed - realizes what he has done to Grace, and with a word craving forgiveness on his lips, looks into her face, as Madeline elbows her way through the crowd, takes him away from Grace and sneers at her. Grace, delirious with an approaching illness, denounces Mrs. Ainsworth for Edwin's downfall and her own suffering. She flees from the cabaret to her own home and gives vent to a flood of tears.

Madeline takes Edwin to his apartment. Of maudlin drunkenness, he begins to feel remorse and has accorded Grace. Madeline mixes him a "brandy" and leaves, to encounter Vincente in the hall. Vincente, out of jealousy and threatens to kill Edwin, lest he should gain time. Madeline promises, sends him to Edwin's rooms to warn him of Vincente's threat.

At this time, Edwin with trembling hands writes a letter to Grace, containing a suicide threat, and takes the gun which he took from the drawer in his room, rushes to him and strikes up his arm just as he is about to pull the trigger. The gun is discharged in the air. She forcibly takes the gun from him who dazed and too surprised to resist, falls upon a couch. Madeline reads the letter and conceals it. Edwin pleads with Madeline for the return of the gun and in a struggle for the possession of same, Vincente realizing that Madeline has double crossed him, comes to Edwin's apartment with the intention of killing Edwin. A shot is fired from Edwin's gun and Vincente falls to the floor - dead. Edwin seeing Vincente dead, is dazed. He stares about the room and when Madeline questions him he seems unable to recognize her. Madeline with the thought in her mind to get away from the police, manages to get the plastic Edwin, whom the shock has robbed him of his memory, to the house of Doctor Giani, where at the same time a tragedy is taking place.

John Wells, has staggered in Dr. Giani's office from the effects of alcohol poisoning. Despite the doctor's efforts to save him, Wells dies and Giani is troubled as to what to do with the body.

Madeline and Edwin arrive at the doctor's office. Madeline tells Dr. Giani what has happened and begs him to save Edwin. After examining him, assures Madeline that Edwin is suffering from Amnesia. He conceives an idea, he takes Edwin's cigarette case and other identification and orders his henchmen to throw the body of John Wells and orders his henchmen to throw the body of John Wells. Though autosuggestion the doctor forces Edwin to remember John Wells, a member of his gang. Edwin's memory gone, he remembers that Madeline has saved him from something dreadful and he is as wax in her hands. The doctor advises Madeline to mail the letter to Grace which she does.

The following day, when Grace gets the letter, she collapses and falls into a spell of brain fever.

Mrs. Ainsworth, aghast at the news that her son is a murderer and suicide, realizes that she is to blame for what has happened. Her animosity toward Grace changes to pity for her. She takes great interest in her and sends her many little dainties. Her own heart is crushed.

Claudia, however, is not yet through meddling. She suggests to Harold that he marry Grace.

Harold realizes that he does love Grace but she refuses.

In the meanwhile, Edwin, dead to the world, has taken the place of John Wells, and his work as the doctor's most trusted lieutenant, and seen through his dubious surroundings. Madeline, constantly fearing some day discover his latent self and may fall into the police, is growing more and more restless and agitated.

Several months later.

The finding of Edwin's body, so long in the water, assures the Ainsworth's that it was the body of Edwin. Grace realizing that she cannot continue life on her own income, gives her mute consent to marry Harold Chase.

Mrs. Ainsworth has urged Grace to let bygones be bygones and to take up her residence with her until her marriage and to be married from her home. Grace, feeling sorry for the woman whose spirit is broken, consents. At last an understanding arises between these two. An understanding that, sooner, might have saved the tragedies of their lives.

An importation of liquor, the landing of which in, has aroused the suspicion of the prohibition agents. A clear road to rounding up the gang. One of their agents get certain information that has led to the theft of certain lists of names of buyers and other evidence. The entire gang to jail and cause a country-wide panic. Citizens urge the doctor to protect them and the United States District Attorney is already on the case. Edwin is detailed to get the evidence back. Madeline objects to Edwin's going. There is no other way out. Edwin manages to get the evidence back from the District Attorney's office and returning home, is met by Madeline, who begins to meddle. She urges the doctor and his clients and with the proceeds of the foreign country and live happily. Edwin, always her slave, agrees. Accordingly, the blackmailing attempt is made. Dr. Giani and his gang naturally resent strongly.

A big scene ensues in which there is a terrific fight, during which a shot is fired, and the shock of it brings back Edwin's memory. He regains his own personality and all that happened since the night of the murder of Vincente is a blank. The doctor and Madeline realize it, and regardless of the fact that the doctor is a

criminal, he is also a scientist and Edwin's case so interests him that he prevents his gang from harming him and studies Edwin's case.

Edwin's memory is completely restored and he wonders how he made connections with this gang. He remembers Madeline - Grace - his mother and when Madeline tells him that he must go back to them, because he is wanted for murder, he had the courage to kill a man, I must have the punishment for the deed." Madeline tells him that he must continue as John Wells, that he is leaving his wife Grace, is marrying his friend, Harold. That only tends to spur his energy. He denounces them from the place and ~~reaches~~ reaches his old home. His wife, married, are going away on their wedding trip and they recognize in the unkempt stranger who comes into the house, Edwin, returned alive. He throws himself at her feet and pleads for forgiveness, and Madeline, who has followed him, staggers against a window, and sees him. Enraged, blinded with jealousy - she shoots Edwin, who falls at Grace's feet.

Grace, hysterically falls on her knees beside Edwin, pillows his dying head upon her lap and declares she never loved any one save Edwin. Servants drag the defiant Madeline in, and she hisses at Mrs. Ainsworth that she is to blame for all this, had she kept away from the cabaret that night, it would never have come to this. Mrs. Ainsworth bows her head and realizes that this is her punishment. Her son given back to her only to be slain before her eyes. ~~The xix~~

The scene fades and Mrs. Ainsworth, Claudia and Edwin are seated in his study. Edwin is reading the last page of a manuscript to them, and whilst Claudia is all agog with the full of offers of suggestions, Mrs. Ainsworth sits by her son. "Sorry, mother," he tells her, "that we have lost our own lives, in order to make you realize where you are." Just then, Madeline, the real Madeline, enters with a tray of lemonade. She greets her with a smile and tells her that he has been thinking of her. Claudia turns upon her and berates her as a traitress. Mrs. Ainsworth tells Claudia to be still and not to be talking, and so has she ~~xxxxx~~ herself.

The astonished maid, carries her to her room. She tells Harold and Grace, who are wondering what details of the story so long.

Mrs. Ainsworth, fully awakened, comes to them, tells Harold she will finance his production providing he will star Grace. She gives Grace her hearty consent to make the most of her talents. Grace and Harold are both astonished, but the entrance of Edwin and Claudia, the former smiling, the latter ready to do so more meddling, convinces Grace and Harold that Edwin has finally brought his mother to her senses. She stops Claudia from speaking, but telling her to

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attend to her moneky that is running off on another depredatory expedition, and herself engages Harold in conversation, whilst Grace slips into Edwin's outstretched arms as he tells her - "There will be no more friction in our home, sweetheart."

"The Finish"

N.B. The incidents from the incident with the doctor, to the shooting of the doctor, and the capture of Madeline, the play Edwin has been writing.

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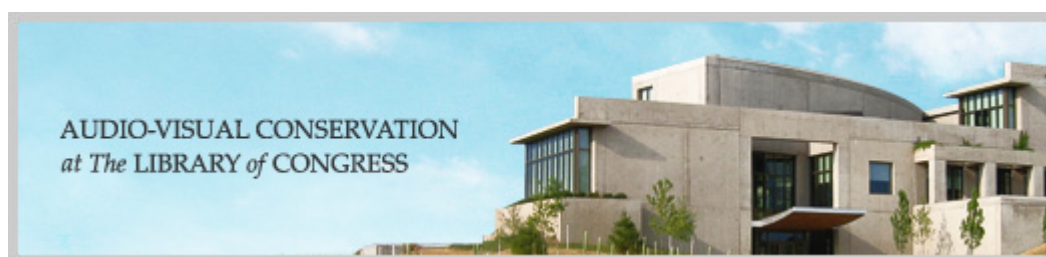
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